

VZCZCXRO6849
OO RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHKI #0886/01 2721128
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 291128Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0134
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0030
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 000886

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/29/2019

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [CG](#)

SUBJECT: NGO ACTIVIST ON RUDIA II, KIMIA II, AND INTEGRATION

REF: KHARTOUM 1053

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires a.i. Samuel V. Brock for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Noel Atama, a field researcher for the NGO ENOUGH, told PolCouns recently that, although the tide had turned against the LRA, capturing LRA leader Joseph Kony and dismantling the rebel group could ultimately take time. On Kimia II, Atama encouraged the FARDC to stay the course, as pursuit of the FDLR was an integral part of improved relations between Kinshasa and Kigali. Kabila and Kagame, according to information Atama received from a presidential advisor, had agreed on two objectives for Kimia II: 1) moving FDLR elements away from the lucrative mining areas; and 2) creating disarray amongst FDLR ranks, causing mass repatriations. Atama argued that not enough was being done to ensure civilian protection in areas from which the FDLR had retreated and from which the FARDC also subsequently withdrew. Atama pointed to integration of the CNDP elements into the FARDC and transparent cooperation on refugee returns as two issues of utmost importance for stability in the Kivus and for a continued rapprochement between Kinshasa and Kigali. End summary.

¶2. (C) Polcouns recently met with Noel Atama, a field researcher for the NGO ENOUGH in the DRC. Atama, who is from Dungu (extreme northeastern DRC), previously impressed us with his knowledge of the military and humanitarian situation in Haut-Uele. He has written several reports for ENOUGH on the LRA. He has also impressed us with his knowledge of political and security issues in the Kivus. He has casually mentioned that he has contacts at senior levels in the GDRC, including in the presidency. While we cannot verify these connections, it would appear that he has access to certain decision-makers or individuals close to these decision-makers in the government.

Rudia II: dismantling the LRA could take time

¶3. (C) Atama praised the effectiveness and discipline of UPDF troops operating in the DRC. While the initial military strike was poorly planned, the tide has demonstrably turned against the LRA. Nevertheless, Atama pointed to several phenomena that were slowing progress. The FARDC, in Atama's opinion, remains weak and dependent on the UPDF. As the rainy season begins, it will become more difficult for the UPDF to track LRA elements. Atama said that, although there was no solid evidence supporting the claim, the Ugandan mission in Sudan has raised concerns that Khartoum would soon start directly supporting the LRA (reftel). Finally, Kony remains elusive. Given all these variables, Atama cautioned that the operation to catch or kill Kony and dismantle the LRA might take time. He reiterated his call, first outlined

in the May ENOUGH Strategy Paper, for a more robust regional and international military effort to track the LRA. However, he conceded that no country would currently consider deploying special forces against the LRA.

Kimia II: don't stop now

14. (C) Acknowledging that most humanitarian organizations have argued for an immediate halt to Kimia II, Atama said that he disagreed with his U.S. colleagues on this point. Atama drew an analogy with Iraq: one can argue whether or not the initial decision to undertake military operations was correct; however, once begun, it was important to continue the operations to a defined conclusion. The international community cannot ask the GDRC to stop now, Atama added. He claimed that the main reason was that GDRC willingness to take on the FDLR had been an integral part of a Kabila-Kagame deal. To go back on this now would run the risk of souring DRC-Rwandan relations.

15. (C) Atama maintained that a presidential advisor had told him that Kabila and Kagame had agreed to the following objectives for Kimia II: 1) push the FDLR away from the lucrative mining areas in the Kivus; and 2) cause enough disarray and damage amongst FDLR ranks so as to provoke mass repatriations to Rwanda. The first goal had been more or less achieved with the FDLR chased away from most of its old commercial stomping grounds, while the second goal had proven difficult to achieve. The FDLR was, in Atama's view, unarguably weakened because of Kimia II. Atama called on the

KINSHASA 00000886 002 OF 003

international community to do more to cut off external financing from Europe and the U.S. That would have an enormous impact on the FDLR's capacity to continue the conflict.

16. (C) Atama criticized FARDC tactics in the military operation. There was a pattern of the FDLR retreating, the FARDC gaining control of an area, then the FARDC withdrawing or moving forward. There was no plan, in Atama's view, to sufficiently protect the civilian population after the FARDC had captured territory and moved on. MONUC does not possess the resources to do more, in Atama's opinion, and the GDRC is simply waiting for the national police to replace FARDC units.

Kabila needs to solve the conflict before 2011

17. (C) Atama noted that Kabila was desperate to harvest a peace dividend in the East well before the 2011 elections. In the end, in Atama's view, this was the primary driving force behind the president's willingness to reconcile with Rwanda. Atama opined that in 2006 most residents of eastern DRC had voted for Kabila because they did not want to vote for a party associated with a rebel movement (RCD-Goma, MLC). The vote was therefore less a vote for Kabila, and more a vote against the others. This time around, Atama added, Kabila cannot count on the same dynamics.

Integration: The FARDC needs to get it right

18. (C) Atama criticized the accelerated integration of CNDP elements into the FARDC, as the CNDP kept their units intact and under the same command structure. Proper integration of former CNDP units into the FARDC was critically important, even for reasons beyond security sector reform. In Atama's view, if the FARDC seriously botches CNDP integration (somehow marginalizes the group), it would give the GoR a pretext to intervene again in the DRC either directly or indirectly. He warned that there were some hard-liners in Kinshasa who believed that Kigali would not intervene to support the CNDP, should the group come under attack. Atama

added that the GDRC was attempting to deal with the CNDP just as it had dealt with the Ituri militias in 2004-2005, moving many of the commanders outside of the region and ignoring the demands of the groups. This strategy, Atama opined, was doomed to fail because most CNDP commanders would ultimately refuse commands outside of the Kivus and CNDP demands (recognition of rank, political and economic positions, return of refugees) could not be shunted aside so easily.

¶9. (C) Integration efforts in South Kivu had been "an abject failure," according to Atama. Even armed groups that had signed the March 23 agreement would not ultimately demobilize, Atama predicted. Especially in South Kivu, ex-CNDP presence in FARDC units had "opened up old wounds."

¶10. (C) Paying its soldiers was the prerequisite for any meaningful security sector reform, Atama said. There were already serious tensions between "active FARDC" involved in the military operations receiving quasi-regular salary payments and "inactive FARDC" outside of the conflict zones, who were generally paid less regularly.

Returning refugees potentially destabilizing factor

¶11. (C) Atama maintained that it would be absolutely essential for the DRC to cooperate closely and transparently with Rwanda to ensure that the eventual return of Congolese Tutsi refugees to the DRC was managed well. Kigali, Atama continued, could send many refugees back to the DRC "under the radar screen." If this is not handled properly, Atama warned that non-Rwandophone ethnic groups, chiefly Nande, and even Kinshasa politicians could foment trouble. In a worst case scenario, rising ethnic tensions could degenerate into open conflict, although Atama said this was not likely in the present conditions.

¶12. (C) Comment: We agree with Atama's observation that a relentless pursuit of Kony and the LRA is the best possible strategy, but that it could take time. If we accept that the GDRC does not want to exhaust all of its already weak military capabilities pursuing the unachievable goal of completely eradicating the FDLR, then it becomes ever more likely the FARDC will (maybe soon) reach a point at which it

KINSHASA 00000886 003 OF 003

will greatly scale back its Kimia II efforts. We agree that a mismanaged CNDP integration could lead to greater problems in the form of a revamped rebel group (if the FARDC ignores some of their legitimate concerns) or in the form of heightened ethnic tensions between Rwandophones and non-Rwandophones. Ultimately, however, the DRC-Rwanda rapprochement is the glue that is holding this all together for the moment. End comment.

BROCK